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XXXIII

THE TALENSE

(*History; Tribal, Clan, and* Soog' *Organization*

101 161 121 INTRODUCTORY: The Talense occupy the area shown on the map. According to the 1921 census report they number 29,972 persons of both sexes. Specimens of the language, called Talene or Talen', have been given in Chapter III. Their appearance, their houses, customs, religion, and organization all seem to me to be very similar to those of their neighbours, the Nankanse. Their languages, too, are very much alike. Had the Talense not been labelled with a separate appellation, I doubt if the anthropologist—save after, perhaps, a very minute investigation—would have considered it necessary to deal with them as a group distinct from the Namnam and the Nankanse. Nevertheless, in accordance with the plan which I mapped out, I have done so. Rites and customs, already investigated, discussed, and described, are here approached from a different angle. Results so obtained are always valuable, even where there is a certain inevitable repetition. The process serves also to fill gaps in the work which has gone before, to which the information obtained later may be considered as supplementary.

128 In dealing with this and the remainder of the tribes, I have endeavoured to group my facts, as far as possible, under the chapter headings already adopted. This arrangement will enable my readers the more readily to piece together the sum total of the data available concerning any one particular subject, and I hope will mitigate somewhat the defects in presentation for which I have already apologized.

173 167 The history of the tribal wanderings of this people follows the same lines as that with which we are now familiar. This history is the record of the migrations, not of the tribe *qua* tribe, but of every clan, the composite of which now forms the group called the Talense (s. Talena; language Talene.) The tribal histories, specimens of which are about to be related, tell of the migrations (within comparatively narrow limits of time and space) of the groups which have for some hundreds of years supplied the Territorial Rulers. Of the wanderings of the original people themselves, who are now largely merged with this foreign element, nothing is really known, except that they were undoubtedly of the stock which I have termed the 'Mole-group', who seem to

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173 have been the original inhabitants of these parts for a much longer
167 period than can be claimed for their aristocracy.

The chief Talense 'towns', in the sense with which we are now
103 familiar, are as follows: Tɔngo, Bade, Gorogo, Si, Winduri, Ten'zugu,
101 Tilega, Yamdiga, Biuŋ, Siega, Duse, Datoko, Gbee, Kpantia, Kpale, Wakyiga, Gbeogo, Zandoya, and Gbea. These settlements, including the subjects of the Chief of Kurugu, now constitute the Talense tribe.

173 *History of Tɔngo* (as told me by the present Chief, Kpama): 'We
622 (i.e. his ancestors) came from Mampurugu, which we left owing to a quarrel between *Misore* and his younger brother—whose name we do not know—about the Chieftainship. *Misore* left Mampurugu in consequence and came first to Boŋo, thence to Saamere; from there he passed through a dense bush and came to the hills. (The Tɔng hills.) At the foot of these hills we found a people whom our ancestors called Gundugo or Talense. We intermarried with these people and have all become Talense. *Misore* died here; his grave is marked by a big baobab tree. He was succeeded by his son, *Seyene*, who, now that his father was dead, returned to Mampurugu[1] and received from the Chief the Chieftainship of Tɔngo. *Seyene* died, and was succeeded by his brother, *Nambogeda*, who also returned to Mampurugu to ask for the Chieftainship. He died, and was succeeded by his younger brother, *Bɔyayeret*, a son of *Seyene*. About this time, the Chief of Mampurugu made one of his son's Chief of Kurugu, and placed Tɔngo under Kurugu. *Bɔyayeret* was succeeded by his "brother" *Sayepele*, a son of *Seyene*, who reported to Kurugu and held his Chieftainship from that ruler. *Sayepele* was succeeded by his brother *Nodeyene* (lit. Short-fowl). *Nodeyene* was succeeded by his younger brother, *Lebsekora* (Old-things-change). He, in turn, was succeeded by *Kusii* (Worn-out-hoe), a son of *Bɔyayaret*. He was succeeded by *Bileu*, who was succeeded by *Lobsaab* (Throw-away-food), his brother, who, in turn, was succeeded by *Belemsale*, his half-brother, who was succeeded by *Belemboo*, a son of *Kusii*. In his time a great famine came, and many people were sold (to the Dagomba). He was succeeded by *Kabu*, a son of *Lobsaab*. *Lobsaab* was succeeded by *Sapelega* (White-clouds), a half-brother of *Kabu*. *Sapelega* was succeeded by *Kakora*, a son of *Bileu*. He was followed by *Nekay*, a son of *Kusii*; followed by *Paheban*, son of *Belemsale*; *Sagbon* (Dark-cloud), *Lebenwana*, *Bupaa*, son of *Kusii*;

[1] Mampurugu, as we shall see later, was the seat of the Head of the foreign element, who, coming somewhere from the eastward, had founded the empires of Mampruse, Moshi, and Dagomba.

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Lebzure, Kunwase (You-do-not-stroke-a-snake), son of *Lebkura*. In his time we fired arrows at the people on the Tong hills; there was a famine and we used to rob them. All the people, except Winkonɔ and Sia, rose against us, saying we were too proud. *Kunwase* was succeeded by *Kundizore* (Water-cannot-pull-down-a-hill), a son of *Sapelega*. There was also a war in his time which arose out of a quarrel during a hunting expedition, in which Bade and Yazore had taken part. Small-pox (called *Naba*, the Chief) also broke out in his time. *Kundizore* was succeeded by *Nalebseyo* (It-will-change-to-the-wet-season), son of *Kabu*. He was succeeded by *Pilibazaa* (Cover-them-all), son of *Bupaa*. During his time the Europeans came. *Pilibazaa* was taken by the white men to Gambaga and asked to pay two hundred cows because the Tɔng people had fired arrows at them (the Europeans). He died at Gambaga and was succeeded by *Kunbanbeo* (Cannot-know-to-morrow), a son of *Kundizore*. He was succeeded by *Yirisanɔ* (Destroyer-of-compounds), alias *Dentele*, a son of *Lebenwana*. In his time the Europeans came and asked the Hill-people (Teŋ-zugu) to come and see them, but they refused. He was succeeded by myself, *Kpama*, son of *Pilibazaa*. I brought my father's bones from Gambaga, and they were buried outside his compound.'

The above list comprises twenty-eight names, and, with other similar genealogies, supplies us with an approximate estimate of the time when the foreigners from Mampurugu first extended their influence to embrace this area. The names of these Chiefs as here given are their titles only; it is forbidden to mention their real names. Such nicknames are called *sam-wur* in Talene, *saan-yure* in Nankane.

The ruling house at Tongo belongs to the *gwegmere* (lion) clan. When I recorded the above and the other histories which follow I had not as yet grasped the full significance of what I came to discover later, namely, that in recording the history of these migrations as supplied by the Chiefs, I was really only tracing the origins of a minute section of the population, i.e. of those who formed the upper ruling class, and not of their subjects, who formed the mass of the people. In consequence I am unable, in the present instance, to specify the clans to which the majority of the inhabitants of the 'towns', already given, really belong. In my notebooks I find these clans, in nearly every case, recorded as 'the lion clan'. This is only due, however, to my having fallen into the error of failing to distinguish between rulers and ruled, and imagining the histories told me by Chiefs and their following to be applicable also to their subjects. I do not make any apology however,

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for the inclusion here of such records, as, once their limitations and significance are realized, they, equally with other information recorded, go to form part of the composite picture which I am attempting to draw of the traditions of these people.

History of Siega (as told me by the Chief Zoaga): 'We came from Mampurugu at the same time as *Misore* (see previous history). The Winkonɔ people are related to us (he refers, I believe, to the Chief of that place). My clan is lion; I am the seventeenth Chief of Siega. The Chieftainship is under (the patronage of) Kurugu and can descend to any one of the lion clan. My first-born also taboos a fowl. We have had a Chief, distinct from *Ten'dan'*, since ancient times. The first Chief of Siega was *Kukye*.'

History of Datoko (as told me by the present Chief, Borezina): 'We came from Mampurugu, but not with *Misore*. We travelled by way of Nuŋ (Nungo); from Nuŋ to Tula; from Tula to Kumbule; from Kumbule to Datoko. We met the Kusase people in the land, but drove them across the river (Volta). We marry the Kusase. We are of the lion clan. Chiefs of Datoko are appointed by Kurugu. The man who gives most presents becomes the new Chief, and on obtaining the Chieftainship will try to recover what he has paid. Now Chiefs are made by Government, but still go to Kurugu to receive the *muŋ'* (red fez). I am the son of the late Chief, and am ninth of my line. Datoko has six sections (*T'i-zug'*); each section, since Europeans came, is in charge of a *kambon-nab'* (head gunman). Since ancient times we have had *Ten'dan'*. Their work and the Chiefs' work are separate. I settle all cases. The *Ten'dan'* performs the ceremonies when the rain does not fall, unless it is at my own *tengzan* (Nankane, *tingane*), when I perform the sacrifices.' (Here, it will be noticed, the *kambon-nab*, appointed by the Chief (who, when a vacancy occurs, bids with the other applicants for the post), are ousting the old time section-heads, called in Talene, *yi-zug-kpuem*, who have been forced into the background. The *Ten'dan'* (Nankane, *Ten'dana*) has also become more or less a nonentity.)

History of Ten'zugu (as told me by Ten'goli): 'My ancestor came from Nasia; he was called *Sumri* and was a son of the Chief of Mampurugu. When his father died he wished to succeed him, but was driven away and came to Bulbi. His enemies followed him there, and again he fled and came to Daa, at the foot of the Tong hills. Later he went on top of the hill and settled there. He found some people called Dagali. They were Talense. We married with them. The Dagali people

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belong to the *Sensereg* (squirrel) clan. We were told by them that the hill did not permit "arrows on the arms," i.e. war. We, too, said we did not want bloodshed. When the *gologo* festival came, we all met on top of the hill and danced. At this festival, the *Ten'dan'* of Dagoli and myself made beer and sacrificed to the land. A month later we sowed.' (I had purposely allowed the Chief to digress from the subject; he now continued.) 'When we came from Nasia we did not see any one here, except the Dagoli people. The Tongo people (see history) had not yet arrived from Mampurugu (near Gambaga). The Dagali had no Chiefs, only *Ten'dan'*; they wore skins. *Sumri* did not become a *Na* (Chief), because he never went back to receive his Chieftainship from Mampurugu. He became *golog'dana* (owner of the drums). The first of my ancestors to go to Mampurugu to get the Chieftainship was *Kumalbeo*; he went to *Na Paya*, the "grandfather" of the present Chief of Mampurugu. He was succeeded by *Atabea*, called after the Chief of Mampurugu, who was his *seyr'* (guardian spirit); Nankane, *segere*.) He was afraid to go to Gambaga because the Europeans were there; he fought with the Europeans because he was told that they had come to take away our land. I am Atabea's son. I was made Chief by the Europeans, but have not yet been confirmed by *Naleregu* (i.e. by the Chief of Mampruse).'

With reference to the title 'owner of the drums', I asked this informant if a man could not become a Chief in a new country independently of Mampurugu. He replied he could not do so unless 'he went to Mampurugu (near the present town of Naleregu, the former capital of the Mampruse State) whence spread all the black race.'

History of Yamdiga (as told me by the Chief): 'We came from Mampurugu; my *Yaba* (ancestor) was *Misore*, as was that of Tongo, Beug, and Siega. My ancestor was *Kamuni*, the eldest son of *Misore*; he was of the lion clan. The Chiefs of Yamdiga have been the following: *Gyenkaret*, *Nantog*, *Nakpeleg*, *Gingano*, *Mwampark*, *Nabsobug*, *Lebbaba*, *Na-kaba*, *Kungazur*, *Kunzerpuk*, *Kunoyokurt*, *Kosom*, *Lebdo*, and *Yinsagbeg* (lit. God's food, the present Chief). We have now become Talense; we no longer circumcise, because the local people would not marry us. The Chief of Kurugu, our "father," still speaks Mampelle, but we no longer do so.'

History of Biun: 'We came from Naleregu (Mampruse), with *Misore*. Our clan is the lion clan; we also taboo goat, and our first-born do not eat a fowl, and women, after reaching puberty, do not eat fowls. We eat goat's flesh, but do not wear its skin until death, when we are

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buried in it. Our first Chief was *Nopeog*. The present Chief is the thirteenth of his line. There are no *Ten'dan'* at Biun[1]; the Chief performs sacrifices. We no longer circumcise. Our Chiefs get the red fez from Kurugu. We no longer speak Dagwanert' (Dagomba).

The history of the ruling class of almost every Talense town follows these lines. This upper class were scions of the Kings of Mampruse, from which place, according to themselves, the black race, i.e. the upper classes of Moshi, Dagomba, and Mampruse—and, just possibly, Ashanti—sprang.

The *Ten'dan'*, among the Talense, have for the most part fallen upon evil days. One old grey-beard, whom I came to know well enough for him to feel he could express his thoughts to me without fear or evasion, said, 'We were once the owners of this land; since the scorpion Europeans came we have entered into holes. You have burned our bows and arrows; we once were keepers of the moons' (referring to the fact that the *Ten'dan'* knew the time for certain annual festivals and kept the calendars.

Clans: The word for clan—a patrilineal and exogamous division—is *burt*, pl. *bura*. As already stated above, I omitted to make exhaustive enquiries as to the clans to which the majority of the common people in each *tey* (settlement) belonged, merely recording in my notebook at the time what I had been told by the various Chiefs or their satellites, with the result that, in almost every case, I have written 'lion clan' opposite the names of the various Talense settlements. In the light of subsequent experience, I now am positive that this statement requires considerable qualification. What I recorded was really only the clan of the particular kindred-group who supplied the ruler. Had I made more extensive enquiries it would, I am certain, have been found that in each *tey* (town, Nankanse *teya*) there was a predominant, if not a single, group belonging to one or another of the clans with whose names we have now become acquainted in dealing with the Nankanse, in addition to the lion clan of the Territorial Ruler. I have, in fact, a note to the effect that the majority of the people of *Tɔnzu* appear to be of the *Ye-ba* (leopard clan), and that certain of my informants state they belong to the *Sakur* (tortoise), *Mey* (water-turtle), *Sako* (a wild cat?), *Nwan* (monkey) and *Waf'* (python), clans.

'I rise (after death) a *sako*', said one informant, "that is my *burt* (clan), but I also taboo *sakur* and *mey*. My ancestor *Tamperypeleg* (white-

[1] This, I was later informed, was not the case, but my informants did not wish the correct facts to be known.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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ashes) was blind, when a *sakur* and *mey* came and asked him what was the matter. He replied, "Sickness." They said, "Open your eyes," and he could see.'

In one of the tribal histories recorded above we again have an example of the violation of a taboo after death—dressing the dead body in a goat-skin. With regard to what we may call the 'royal clan', i.e. lion clan, I was told: 'In olden times, if any one killed a lion, the skin was sent to the Chief of Kurugu, who then sent it on to the Chief of Mampurugu. There a funeral ceremony was held for it.'

Blood Relationship: Relationship, transmitted through the female line, is called *soog'* (compare the Nankanse *sōō*). The *soog'* groups are well known, but, as far as I could discover, do not bear any special names. The *soog'* exhibits all the characteristics already noted with regard to the Nankanse *sōō*.[1] A male cannot transmit a taint of witchcraft, inherited from his mother. 'If your mother can fly (*ak*) (that is, is a witch), you can fly.' (*Soe* is a witch in Talene).

'My sister's child is my *soog'*, my brother's child is not; he is my son.' Again, *ziim* (blood) and *soog'* are synonymous terms.

[1] See Chapter XVIII.

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NAMNAM

XXXVIII

THE NAMNAM

History, Tribal and Clan Organization

101 THE Namnam (*Anglice* Nabdams) are a tribe numbering 8,063.
161 They inhabit the triangular strip of country bounded on the east
131 by the Red Volta; the Talense lie to the south, the Nankanse on the west. They are among the smallest of the Northern Territory tribes. The people call themselves Namnam (sing. Nabt), the language Nabte, and their country Nabrug. The Namnam call the Kasena, Yuls, and the Nankanse, Gurse; the Kanjagas, Bulse, and the Mampruse and Dagomba, Dagbwan. Specimens of the Nabte language have been given in Chapter III.

103 The capital town (*teŋa*) of the head Chief is Nangoot (*Anglice* Nangode). The following history was given me by the head Chief:
•173 'Our first ancestors were called *Loro* and *Zan*. *Zan* is the name of a
167 tree which was this ancestor's *segere*. There was a quarrel about the
563 Chieftainship at Naleruk (Naleregu, near Gambaga) and these
622 ancestors of ours, who were full brothers, left Gambaga and first
793 settled near a place called Gos, in the Kusase country. There was nothing but thorn scrub there, so the place was named Namgoel, "the Chieftainship of thorns". We quarrelled with the Kusase and came here and gave the place its name. When we came here, we found a people who had not any Chiefs, only *Ten'danam* (*Ten'dama*). They spoke the language now called Nabte. Our people followed *Loro*, and *Zan* became the first Chief. He died and is buried here. The people whom we overtook here, we called Namnam. We became their Chiefs.
[421] We own the people, the *Ten'danam* own the land. The present *Ten'dan'* is called Biriwanab, his grove (*tengban*) is known as Dakyirig. The *Ten'dan'* makes sacrifices to the land. *Ten'danam* are like your European doctors. *Zan* was succeeded by *Dyeten*. I think he was *Zan's* son, but it is a long time ago. Each Chief when he dies has a stone which is
[778] bathed, rubbed over with shea butter, and kept in the compound of the new Chief in a room. These stones are called *kpwim kuga* (spirit-stones). A sacrifice is made once a year to them. *Dyeten* was succeeded by *Pubuge*. During his time, we heard that the black gun-men (Ashanti?) came with war and reached Akorog (lit. the River). We met them with arrows and had many men taken captive.

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NAMNAM

'Any one who fights with guns we call *Kambonse*. *Pubuge* was succeeded by *Isaka*—we Dagomba were accustomed to give such Mohammedan names to our children. No European had as yet come to our country. We kept in touch with Naleregu, and our Chiefs receive the red fez from Naleregu to this day. *Isaka* was succeeded by *Konteem* (Fail-to-think). He was succeeded by *Bazirene* (They-do-not know that). He was succeeded by *Lamsir*, *Dayi*, *Kapeon*, *Too*, *Yelazoo* (Palavers-in-plenty), *Zure*, and *Nwena*. In his (*Nwena's*) time, the white man came; we fired at them with arrows as they passed. *Nwena* was succeeded by *Ti* (Tree); a tree was his *segere*. During his time, the Europeans asked him to make a road between Navaro and Bawku, but he refused. *Ti* was killed by his own people, because they thought he was conspiring with the Europeans. I myself, *Zuru II*, ran to Bawku and thence to Gambaga and came with Captain Welim (Wheeler?) and we fought and many people were killed; after which peace came.

'Our ancestors were Dagomba,[1] now we are all Namnam. We marry with Kusase, Gruse, Talense. We formerly circumcised.[2] Our ancestors had no marks, but now we tattoo like the Nankanse. I was cut at Do, near Bono. Namnam women have a special marking called *ta velim* (lit. fine marks), running from the nose across the cheeks and round the neck ending on the shoulders.'

Clans: 'The clan (*bura*) of Chiefs is the big-snake clan, *Wa'tetaam* (python). All the fifteen Chiefs who preceded me were of this clan. A python once showed an ancestor where to get water. The people have their own clans.'[3]

Namnam Towns under Nangode: Nangoot (where the head Chief lives), Peluno, Damologo, Tendono, Logode, Dagelega, Zanleregu, Son, Dakyigu, Mosi, Kono, Dobila, Sapare, Dasablego, Gono, Zoga, Yokote, Nyoboka.[4] Each of these towns is known as a *teya*.

Constitution of Namnam Teya: Each *teya* is divided into a number of *yi zut* (sing. *yi zugo*) sections; each section is under a *yi-zu-kpwema* (Elder of a section); all the sections are under one *Kambon-nab* appointed by the head Chief. The head Chief, an exceptionally fine

[1] He does not make any distinction between Mampruse and Dagomba.

[2] The Namnam women have the clitoris removed at the age of puberty.

[3] I, unfortunately, went down with fever and had to cut short my stay with the Namnam before I had made a record of these.

[4] Datoko, Namoo, Sakote, and Dusi are Namnam settlements, but not under the Chief of Nangode.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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NAMNAM

kills a beast, I receive some, not otherwise. I own the land in the bush, not so the *Godau*.

'Things found on the land, except beads, belong to the *Ten'dan*', also lost fowls, iron, worked or unworked, goats, sheep, and cows. A horse or a donkey goes to the Chief; these are not permitted to enter my kraal. If any one found these things and kept them, his home would break. The finder of beads, guinea-fowls, a cloth, cowries, may keep them if not claimed, but if the cowries[1] were many, he would give some to the Chief and to the *Ten'dan*'. A lost child belongs to the Chief; it is forbidden for a *Ten'dan*' to take such a one, she may not eat anything with hairs (i.e. a person).'

Tattooing: A *Ten'dan*' must not have tattoo marks, but markings called *Taavelem* do not matter.[2]

Harvest Festivals: 'Beans, ground-nuts, and new crops must first be given to the groves, after which every one may eat. Only naked people may go to the groves. A *Ten'dan*' has to be so careful not to eat new crops before the groves have done so, that, when the corn is ripening, his water-pots have to be covered over to prevent any grain from being blown into them.' He concluded the above by stating: 'Our ancestors did not come from any other place. *Na Wen* (God) created our *Taba* and allowed him to be on the land. No stranger can possess *ten-kur* (land stones).[3] Formerly we called our land Zug, and there were only thorns upon it. Then the Dagbama (Dagomba) came and ate the Chieftainship and called the land Gohe-nam or Nangoot. Our mother's children are the *Ten'dan*' of Pals (near Zuarono). They went there from this place. Our taboo is red clay; we do not use it for plastering the walls of compounds.'[4]

A rapid survey of other matters, fully described in previous chapters, revealed everywhere a uniform similarity in customs and beliefs with those of their neighbours. A more intensive investigation will no doubt reveal differences in detail here and there, but the task of recording these I must leave to others and pass on to examine the next tribe, the Kusase.

[1] See p. 378.
[2] This prohibition was, I was informed, only local.
[3] See p. 256.
[4] See footnote 6, p. 244.

1: Rattra E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Kusase

Kusase, being founded by the ruling class. Timoni, another settlement, now included among and talking Kusal, are really Buls' (Builsa).

My informants stated that the Nabt of Kugri, who taboo the heart of an animal, and the Nabt of Timpale, who taboo a fish, formerly did not intermarry but now do so. I was also informed that at Pusig' there is a clan (?) called Narem whose totem is *naf zur* (a cow tail), but that these people, though now talking Kusal, were formerly Bimoba.

From the above it would appear that we had here among the Kusase, two endogamous clans, Zuos and Nabt, a third having been lately added by the breaking away of a branch of the former which had acquired a sub-totem, i.e. the fish, while other clans which may be found in this area are those introduced by the influx of other tribes, Bimoba, Builsa, and Mampruse. In other words, there are signs of the dual organization having existed there. Proof of this supposition must, however, await a fuller and more minute investigation. A parallel to this will, as we shall see later, be found among a neighbouring tribe, the Tampolense (see Chapter LVI).

The blood-related kindred-groups found among the Nankanse, &c., also exist here, being known as *sog*. Again we find the taint of witchcraft transmitted only down this line. 'If your mother "cannot see", if your mother is "blind", all her descendants through the female line are also blind. This relationship is called *sog*. *Soe* is a witch. To "see" is a bad thing. In old days if we found a witch we wanted to tie him up and beat him until he died. You cannot leave a person who is eating people; he will spoil the world. As the Elders sit and converse at night, they will see a fire flickering *ta ta ta* at some compound, and when some one dies, the *baa* (soothsayer) will find out that there is a witch in that compound. Many people can "see" but do not eat people. The children of witches are the beautiful women whom men love the most. In olden times when a witch killed your child or "brother" you would want to kill him, but others would beg you to forgive him.'

Traditions of the Kusase: 'When the Mampruse came from Gambaga, they found us here. In old days we only knew *Tenedan'* and had no *Na* (Territorial Ruler). We have always been here. Even when we move about in the locality and overtake some other people, we sacrifice to the land. *Tenedan' da moro ti* (the *Tenedan'* had us), we did not know what is now called *Nam* (Chieftainship). When anything happened, we all met and gave him (the *Tenedan'*) things to sacrifice and thus gained life and grain. The *Tenedan'* had power; when any one refused to obey him he would strike the land (*nwe tey*) and that person would

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Kusase

173 622 793 die. He would tap the land with his fingers and say, "*Tey ya be, zagala saam ka nees tey la okom*" (If such a thing as the land really is, (here is) So-and-so who has offended and treated you as of no account, may you kill him).[1] The land will break his compound; his fowls, goats, sheep, children, wives will die. The offender would approach an Elder and "beat his hands" and ask him to intercede with the *Tenedan'* on his behalf. Chiefs now own the people, but *Tenedan'* still own the land. The first Chief of Kagbiri was my father. He was *Tenedan'* at the time when the Germans made him Chief. The present Chief is Ati, he is my father's child (i.e. son of the speaker's father's brother). My father, after the Germans made him Chief, used to delegate the work of *Tenedan'* to me, so when he died and Ati was made Chief we continued to do the same.'

177 793 622 171 At this place (Kagbiri) so far as I could see, we find the Territorial Ruler (who is not a foreigner, but one of the family of the former *Tenedan'*), and the *Tenedan'*, 'his brother', working in complete harmony. The Germans, it will be noted, whether by accident or design, had made the *Tenedan'* also the Territorial Ruler. The significance of the rather curious and suggestive procedure—which I have also noted elsewhere—whereby a *Tenedan'* who, by chance, has become Chief, delegates the religious part of his duties to another, should not be overlooked. The multifarious administrative and executive duties, which the Territorial Ruler is asked by us to undertake, cannot be wholly responsible for this. This may be proved by an examination of the position of a Chief in Ashanti, where these two functions—religious and secular—are combined in one person. Perhaps the bad example set by the majority of foreign Chiefs in these parts, who were always unconcerned with local land-gods, may partly account for this. On the other hand, it must not be overlooked, that by far the most important religious duties performed by Ashanti Chiefs for their people are the ceremonies in connexion with their own ancestral spirits, in which their subjects now join, and not those rites in connexion with the land, which has tended to become alienated, although theoretically they still belong to the Stool. Many Northern Territory Rulers, while ignoring land gods, would, nevertheless, lay claim to the land. The following are some further notes on the duties and privileges of the *Tenedan'* among the Kusase.

793 [781] 'When the rain does not fall, the Elders consult the soothsayer and report to the *Tenedan'* what the *baa* (soothsayer) has told them. The

[1] Compare p. 370. (i.e. different practice among Namnam)

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of the Tong Hills; yet 'we and the Talis are one' they maintain. In proof of this they point out that their *Tɛŋən-lɛbəgət* Festival belongs to the same cycle as *Da'a* and *Bɔyaraam*, though they have but the vaguest hearsay knowledge of the esoteric ritual of these festivals. Their neighbours at Sie and Datɔk they call Namoos.

Note: For convenience of exposition we shall adopt the following convention in this book. Whenever we speak of all the inhabitants of Taleland, irrespective of their internal subdivisions, we shall use the name given to them by other outsiders and speak of them as *Tallensi*. When we wish to refer to that section of the Tallensi whom they themselves describe as the 'real Talis', we shall refer to them as *Talis*, distinguishing among them, when necessary, between the *Hill Talis*, who live on and around the Tong Hills, and the Talis of the Plain, who live nearer Tongo (i.e. Zubiuŋ, Gbizug, Ba'ari, Yayazuor).

Nomenclature and the Structural Scheme

This nomenclature reflects a structural scheme of considerable complexity. It points to institutional allegiances which segregate adjacent social units from each other and group together spatially dispersed units. The major cleavage it reveals is that between the Namoo communities, on the one hand, and the settlements of the real Talis and of those who claim to be akin to them, on the other. But it indicates, also, that there are other lines of division and bonds of union both within each major grouping and cutting across the cleavage. It is a cardinal principle of Tale social structure that every social grouping defined as a unit in one situation, or according to one principle, dissolves into an association of lesser and differentiated units in another situation or according to another principle. Variation in custom or in ideological emphasis is regarded by the natives as one of the most significant indices of group differentiation. It is also, as we shall see, an important factor of social integration.

It is therefore a topic of perennial interest to the natives to observe and comment on variations of usage and doctrine. The idea that identity of custom and belief is desirable or natural is inconceivable. Everybody adheres staunchly to the forms of social behaviour accepted in his own group without desiring to impose them on others. 'Look at the Namoos,' observed Ta'aŋ one day, 'don't they (i.e. different sections of the same clan) do different things at funeral ceremonies? But their use of a goat (in mortuary rites), that is all one. We Talis, again, using our sheep (in mortuary rites)—this is the same for all of us. But as for our ritual, we split up and do different things.' Each one with his father's ways, everyone with his ancestor's ways (*Sɔ ni u ba yɛl, sɔ ni u yaab yɛl*)—that is, every group has its distinctive ancestral customs—is a characteristic Tale aphorism. This attitude, emphasizing simultaneously community and differentiation, similarity of pattern, and divergence of detail, permeates Tale thought.

Myths of Origin

Whenever Tallensi discuss the cleavages in their society they trace

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173 them back to differences of origin. Everyone knows that all Namoos came originally from Mampurugu, how long ago nobody can tell. The tradition of Tongo, as it was related to me on many occasions, is as follows: The ancestor who founded Tongo was Mosuor. He was the Paramount Chief (*na'ab*) of Mampurugu, but had to flee the country after being vanquished in a fight for the chiefship. When he reached Tongo the Gbizug tɛndaana, Gɛnɔt, was living there. Mosuor came to the house but found nobody there; for Tɛndaan Gɛnɔt had seen him coming and had sought refuge in the nearby hills. Now, there is a watercourse a little distance off and there he found a shallow pit beside which stood a *kiŋkaŋ* (*Ficus*) tree which was shedding its leaves. A path led from this water-hole towards the Hills and someone had been carrying water which had spilled over on to this path. 'Thereupon', to quote the version of one of my Tongo informants, 'our ancestor said, "There is someone in these hills who comes to fetch water here". So he caused the dry fig leaves to be scattered on the path and went to hide quietly. In due course he saw Tɛndaan Gɛnɔt stepping along the path, while the leaves crunched *kaya, kaya,* coming to fetch water. Thereupon our ancestor Mosuor, having seen him, caught him and asked him what he was afraid of. Why did he run away and hide? Gɛnɔt replied that he had seen him wearing a gown and that there was something on his head all red, and fear took hold of him.[1] So Mosuor brought him back and asked, "Who owns this house?" He said that it was his house, and Mosuor brought him home thither and said that he himself would settle down here and Gɛnɔt as well. He said that Gɛnɔt would be his tɛndaana to carry out the sacrifices on his behalf.'

Gbizug elders told the story of Mosuor in much the same way but omitting the trick by which Mosuor caught their ancestor, adding that it was the horses and guns of Mosuor that inspired fear in Tɛndaan Gɛnɔt.

173 608 They say, also, that having accepted Mosuor as a settler and having allotted land to him close beside his own homestead, he told Mosuor what were the taboos of the country (*tɛŋɔn-kiha*), and entered into a solemn pact of blood-brotherhood with him. They *ŋma pɔlɔŋ*, cut wrists. A cut was made on the wrist of each, and each licked the blood of the other. Thus *'ba leeba mabiih, ba leeba soog*, they became brethren, they became uterine brothers' and pledged themselves and their descendants to perpetual peace. This was a unique instance of blood-brotherhood, which is not practised in Taleland to-day.

773 According to this tradition, Tɛndaan Gɛnɔt told Mosuor of his kinsmen, the Ba'at-Sakpar Tɛndaana, the Wakii Tɛndaana, the Degal tɛndaana, and the Ka'ar tɛndaana. These five were the original inhabitants of the country. They sprang from the Earth itself, say their descendants. At Gbizug they declare that Tɛndaan Gɛnɔt's ancestor Bumbiogta'adug sprouted from the earth (*u bulme na*), he had no father or mother (*u ka ba u ka ma*). Pressed further they say, *'u yi Naawun zug sig na*—he descended from Heaven'. Heaven and Earth are one, they contend; they have the same mystical value. At Wakii they call their first

[292] [1] A red fez and a cloth tunic are the distinctive costume of chiefs of Mampuru origin. Tɛndaanas may not wear garments of cloth. They are ritually obliged to wear skins only. Chiefs and their clansmen may ride horses, tɛndaanas not.

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ancestor Tɛŋənbulɔg—Earth-begotten—and give the same myth of his origin. The people of Degal and of Ka'ar attribute a similar origin to their first ancestors. Tɛndaan Gɛnət is said to have begotten Dagbeog (Bearded man) whose descendants are the Gbeog people, who are therefore a 'brother' lineage to Gbizug (=*Gbeog zug*, the upper part of Gbeog).

One of Gɛnət's 'brothers'—the exact genealogical relationship is regarded as of no consequence, some describing him as *soog* (uterine kinsman), others as *pit* (younger brother)—was Daŋug (Red man), a hunter who founded the Ba'at-Sakpar line; and another 'brother' of his founded one of the Zubiuŋ lineages. Indeed all the primordial tɛndaanas were 'brothers' in a more general sense, the concepts of kinship serving here consciously to identify them with one another.

These myths, meagre as they appear, are laid down with a finality of conviction that makes any question of their historical truthfulness irrelevant.

Most of the Hill Talis are also alleged to have been immigrants originally who arrived to find the Degal Tɛndaana living on top of the hills. But their myths of origin are as deficient in circumstantial detail as those of the primordial tɛndaanas. Thus candid people at Yinduuri said complacently: 'We don't know, it is said that our ancestor came from Tampolɔŋ in Mampurugu, but now we have all become Talis.' People of other clans told a vague story of an ancestor wandering about the uninhabited hills, sheltering in caves, until one day he observed the smoke of a fire. Going towards it he discovered the Degal tɛndaana, and later settled on the Hills. Gorogo is said to have been founded thus by Woolisi immigrants, Sii by Bulisi and Mamprusi, and some of the Tɛnzugu lineages by Mamprusi, Kusaasi, or Gɔrisi. The origins thus attributed to any community symbolize special ritual relationships with the areas they are alleged to have migrated from, which are still maintained.

All these myths of origin become intelligible when it is realized that they are nothing more than formulations of the contemporary scheme of political and ceremonial relationships. The Tallensi themselves are philosophers enough to appreciate this. Many Namoos, for example, privately view the myth of the primordial tɛndaanas with unaffected scorn. 'They lie', declared Saɣəbazaa, a shrewd and respected elder of Tongo, himself a kinsman of the present[1] Gbizug tɛndaana. 'Ahuman being can't emerge sprouting out of the earth. The rain falls, and the millet comes up, trees come up, grass comes up; but we have never seen a human being sprout up.' When I tried to defend the tɛndaanas, he countered triumphantly: 'And if their ancestor really sprouted up, why don't they let a person sprout again?' Then, with a sudden inspiration he proposed an explanation: 'Suppose you come and settle here and your children succeed you, and their children, and their children succeed and so on, and so on. Then, one day strangers come and ask your descendants whence they have sprung. Will they not say that their ancestor was begotten of the earth? We Namoos', he concluded, 'are immigrants (*kpeeha*) here.' This acute estimation of the myths gives a clue to their

[1] The present time throughout this book refers to the years 1934–7.

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ideological significance as a counterweight to the Mosuor legend and as a dogma of prior habitation.

In the Sie district the Sawalɔg people, whose political and ceremonial relations with the Sie Namoos are exactly parallel to those of Gbizug with Tongo, also declare that their ancestor came into being miraculously, self-generated. In the identical phraseology of the people of Gbizug and Wakii, they say, 'Our ancestor descended from Heaven', or 'Our ancestor sprouted from the earth'. I once challenged the clan-head of Sawalɔg to prove how this was possible. His answer, shrewdly rationalistic, deserves to be recorded. 'We have not heard that our ancestor came from any other land. We have no other land to return to as the Sie people (immigrant Namoos) have. If they desecrate (*sayəm*, lit. spoil) the land here, they return to their (original) land yonder (at Tongo). That is why we say that we have descended from Heaven'—an interpretation which coincides with that of Saɣəbazaa, the Namoo.

The covenant between Mosuor and Tɛndaan Gɛnət, again, accords well with a myth which is but a projection into the unchallengeable past of the present-day relationships between Gbizug and Tongo. The amorphous and unstandardized myths of origin with which the Hill Talis are satisfied symbolize the remarkable social integration they had achieved before their subjugation by the British in 1911. For nowadays the Hill Talis are rent by factions and by an intestine struggle for power amongst the various ritual office-holders. Rival claims are validated by citing established custom, by appealing to the memories of men, or, in the last resort, by the fabrication or distortion of myths of origin. The Administration recognizes as chiefs only those clan heads whose title is derived directly or indirectly from the Paramount Chief of the Mamprusi. Hence we find the Golibdaana of Tɛnzugu justifying his pretensions to recognized chiefship by concocting, for the benefit of a white inquirer, a story of how the founder of his lineage migrated thither from Mampurugu—a story which his enemies scoff at. The Sii Bɔɣaraan, on the other hand, tries to strengthen his claim to precedence by alleging not only a Mampuru origin for his ancestors, but also that they were the very first to come and settle on the Hills.

These new myths are part of the defensive ideologies engendered by social conflict, but they follow the axioms of Tale thought. The Tallensi have no conception of a mythological or historical past of their society when people lived and behaved differently from to-day. The past is but an extension into the days of their forefathers of the life of to-day on the same rational plane of existence. Their history is to them not a sequence of events or a progression but a continuity. All that matters of the past, which lies beyond the span of man's recollection, lives on in the social structure, the ideology, the morality, and institutions of to-day. These are the palpable proofs of things that happened '*oh ho, ti banam ni ti yaanam ni*—in the days of our forefathers and ancestors'; one can infer from them what must have been the state of society in those far-off times. Conversely, the social arrangements which prevail to-day are valid, sensible, and appropriate not only because they achieve desired ends but also because *banam ni yaanam ndaa piil na*—the forefathers and ancestors

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started and transmitted them. Custom is not inviolable in its own right. It is compelling because it is the legacy of the ancestors.

These notions are perfectly explicit in the behaviour and thought of the natives, for whom they have a profound moral value. *Banam ndaa ɛŋ de, yaanam ndaa ɛŋ de*—our forefathers used to do it, our ancestors used to do it, is a recurrent formula in every ceremonial speech or ritual invocation during the Great Festivals. So the Samiitna'ab protesting his loyalty to traditional values and to the Kpata'arna'ab, in the latter's feud with the Golibdaana, exclaimed: 'It is the young men who are causing the trouble. They desire their cloths and their caps; but I know only what my ancestors did (*man mi la n-yaanam ndaa ɛŋ siem*). My ancestor (*n-yaab*) wore a skin and I, too, wear a skin; my ancestor knew nothing of cloth. I know only my forefathers' path and I adhere to that (*man mi la mbanam suor, man dɔla deni*).'

In the same way, and because their social system engenders so strong a sense of the continuity and stability of their culture and social organization, Tallensi always stress the importance of passing on to their descendants the way of life bequeathed to them by their forefathers. At ceremonies or when disputes are argued out before a chief or a lineage head, it is not uncommon to hear the old men praise the young men who attend. 'Thus,' the old men say, 'they (the young men) will learn the customs (*yɛla*) of our ancestors.' Tallensi place an extremely high value on their social order. An individual or a particular corporate group might desire to alter his or its position in the society. A man might desire to have greater prestige or more power than his neighbours. A clan might strive to assert its supremacy over other clans, whether or not it is entitled to do so. No one would dream of trying to overthrow the whole social order or of agitating against the existing customs and values.

This does not mean that Tale customs never change, or that the Tallensi believe this to be the case, or invariably resist cultural changes. There have been many shifts in custom and usage during the past two decades. The imposition of peace and an embryonic judicial system have diminished the tensions that kept unrelated clans apart and so have made it unnecessary for them to over-emphasize the emblems and symbols of their separateness. Fifteen years ago men of a tendaana's clan used to observe strictly the taboo against wearing gowns and trousers, the distinctive garments of chiefs and men of chiefly (i.e. Namoo) clans. To-day the young men of tendaanas' clans all wear such clothes outside the territory with which they have direct ritual ties. By this simple compromise they make the best of both worlds, the old world of strictly defined local, genealogical, and politico-ritual exclusiveness and the new world of free movement, unrestricted social intercourse with all and sundry, and cheaper clothes. They wear the ancient prescribed garb of a skin and a loin-cloth on ritual occasions, especially during the Great Festivals, when they take a pride in advertising their politico-ritual status. This change of custom does not cut athwart the basic values and principles of Tale social organization. It has arisen because the young men of tendaanas' clans are as eager to display themselves in fine clothes as the young men of other clans, and because the wearing of clothes is economically easier to attain than

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178 formerly, and the social cleavages symbolized in this habit are no longer
184 so drastic as before. On the other hand, when the Golibdaana, in his overweening conceit, tried to copy the dress and the court procedure of
178 a Mampuru chief, there was wide indignation. The Chief of Tongo,
184 with whom he thus sought to equate himself, protested with such vigour
626 to the District Commissioner that the latter ordered the Golibdaana to stop his new practices. A man of enormous wealth and great power failed to get away with an innovation prepared with extravagant expense, because it ran counter to the politico-ritual structure of the society. He would never, incidentally, have dared to attempt this in former times, or, for that matter, have had the motive to do so. His behaviour is due to the arrogance of newly acquired wealth and power. But Tale institutions are still too strongly integrated to give way to such blatant subversion.

613 The notions of the continuity, persistence, and stability of their culture and social organization, so vital for the Tale outlook on life, have their roots in the lineage system. The whole social system of the Tallensi hinges on their lineage system with its religious counterpart, an elaborate ancestor cult. Unbroken continuity of descent, persistence of self-identical corporate units, stability of settlement—these are the intrinsic characteristics of the Tale lineage system. It requires the assumption, which the ancestor cult places beyond question, that the social structure of to-day is the same as it was in the past.

173 The Tallensi, therefore, have no history in the sense of a body of
773 authentic records of past events. The memories and reminiscences of
576 the old men are parts of their biographies and never contribute to the building up of a body of socially preserved history. Their myths and legends are one means of rationalizing and defining the structural relationships of group to group or the pattern of their institutions. Some of them have perhaps been built up around events which actually occurred and people who actually lived. It is, for example, quite probable that the Namoos actually came from Mampurugu originally, and that Mosuor really lived. The ancestor cult, the settled life, and the whole cultural idiom of the Tallensi lend support to such an inference, but there is no objective evidence. Tale myths and legends counterfeit history; they do not document it. They are a part of Tale social philosophy, projected into the past because the people think of their social order as continuous and persistent, handed down from generation to generation. A myth or a legend postulates a beginning for what has existed thus ever since. Even in our civilization naïve philosophers try to understand their society by similar devices. In the elaborately differentiated structure of Tale society there are regions of high tension where groups are coupled together in polar opposition and regions of low tension where the units of structure are articulated in complementary relations to one another. The myths epitomize the factors which differentiate one group from another. The greater the differentiation at any point the more elaborate is the legend. Hence we find the most definitive and conspicuous legend, that of Mosuor, associated with the relationship of greatest tension, that of the Namoos to the Talis. We find, also, that the emphasis of a myth is on the relationships which most precisely define the structural position

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of the group to which it refers. Owing to the balanced distribution of political and ceremonial functions between units of structure, the members of a group always overrate their own relative significance while non-members underrate its importance. These, sometimes contradictory, valuations find expression, also, in the way myths are presented. It is the technique of contraposition coming to the surface again. When, therefore, in these days new tensions develop, erupting sometimes into open conflict, they are inevitably reflected in the cast given to their myths of origin by interested parties.

The Major Cleavage in Tale Society

Our reconnaissance of the cultural landscape of the Tallensi has left us with a tangle of facts which do not fall into an obvious pattern. The reader may rest assured that his perplexity bears no comparison to that of an ethnographer seeking, for the first time, to understand Tale culture and social organization. The perspective changes as the investigator shifts his vantage point. The greatest puzzle of all is why there is so little apparent unity and coherence in an area of such dense and close habitation, carrying a population that has been sedentary for a long time, has a more or less homogeneous culture, and a strong sense of the continuity and stability of its social order. Leaving aside this puzzle, for the present, let us see what are the positive conclusions to which our survey leads.

The point of primary importance is that a major cleavage runs through the whole of Tale society. On the one side stand communities or parts of communities the members of which are generally agreed to be the descendants of immigrant Mamprusi. These are the Namoos. On the other side stand similar social groups who claim to be and are accepted as the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country and earlier immigrants whom they absorbed. This cleavage is given a symbolic formulation in myths of origin the historicity of which need not concern us.

This cleavage is so fundamental that it permeates the whole social outlook of the people. One sees it most vividly in the martial choruses chanted at important funerals. One of the high lights at the opening ceremonies of the funeral of an important person is a grand mimic war march (*dee*) of the men of the clan. In their finest clothes, weapons in hand, plumed helms on their heads, blowing whistles and accompanied by drummers, the men gather in lineage squadrons to march round the settlement, and eventually mass at the house of the funeral. They march irregularly in an unorganized mob with excited children trailing behind and women dancing on the flanks trilling the shrill *kpelɔmɔt* cry of elation. And as they march, especially as they approach the funeral house, they chant defiant challenges against their traditional enemies in the wars of former days. 'Yo ho!' they chant, 'we might rise one day at break of dawn to sally forth against certain people.' 'Is it not because of us', the Namoos chant taunting the Talis, 'that you have water to drink?' And again, 'Do you not mock at them, do you not laugh at them?' And now and then a man leaps forward, crouches scowling, pretends to shoot off an arrow, and cries scornfully, 'If it were not for the white man, by now we would be meeting them in battle'. It is all play-acting, but there is an

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CHAPTER IV

CLANSHIP: THE NAMOOS

The Dispersion of Mosuor bii

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[77]

FOR the Namoos of Tongo[1] history begins with Mosuor. Of his Mampuru forbears nothing is known. When a Namoo piously invokes the names of Toohug and Gbamwaa, the mythical founders of the Mampuru State, these are to him mystical words. Dominated in his moral and mystical thought by the ancestor cult, he is ready to infer that they were probably remote ancestors of the Mampuru stock; but no one in Taleland knows the myths which the Mamprusi relate about them. There is at the present time constant intercourse between the Tallensi and the Mamprusi, especially between the Tale chiefs and the court of the Paramount Chief of Mampurugu (*Mampurugna'ab*); but the myth of Toohug and Gbamwaa has not diffused to the Tallensi, for it has no relevance to their internal social structure, and the names alone suffice to symbolize the bond of common stock with the Mamprusi.

Mosuor died at Tongo. His grave indicates where his homestead stood, a stone's throw from the sacred dancing-ground, Giŋgaaŋ Puhug, which was the site of Tɛndaan Gɛnɔt's homestead. After Mosuor's death, it is related, his eldest son, Naŋkamuŋ, wished to assume the chiefship at once; but a younger son, Sɛyahɔg, insisted that his father's death should be ceremonially reported to the Mampurugna'ab, the fountain-head of their chiefship (na'am). He went secretly to do so, and was invested with his father's chiefship by the Chief of the Mamprusi in return for a payment of 100 cattle. Naŋkamuŋ, resenting his younger brother's guile in robbing him of his patrimony, thereupon seceded and settled at Yamɔlɔg beside the people of Sɔk and their tɛndaana. This place, it is related, came to be called so because Naŋkamuŋ declared that he would go and settle just nearby (*yama yama*), where he could keep in touch with his kinsfolk at Tongo.

Sie, which the Namoos say means beside (*sie*, side) Yamɔlɔg, was founded by another 'son' of Mosuor, Kuŋkye. Sie people claim to have been the first settlers in the area. On the other hand, with characteristic emphasis on their own priority, Sawalɔg people assert that Kuŋkye was received by their ancestor the Sawalɔg tɛndaana, who had 'sprouted from the earth'. The tɛndaana allowed him to settle there beside (*sie*) himself, after having presented him ritually to the Earth shrines. This myth is a replica of that told by the Gbizug people, and symbolizes a structural and ideological relationship of the same order as that which exists between Gbizug and Tongo.

Yet another 'son' of Mosuor—the exact genealogy is obscure, since *bii*, child, can be used to refer to any descendant—migrated to Biuk, where his descendants adopted the speech and customs of the Gɔris.

[1] The correct vernacular form is Tɔŋɔ, but we shall keep the more familiar English form throughout this book.

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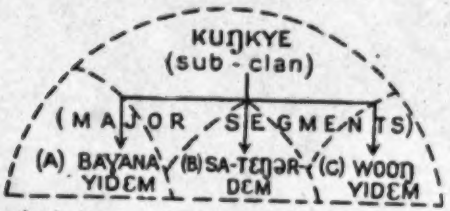
CLANSHIP: THE NAMOOS



But Sie also includes a pair of accessory lineages, (D) Daaŋ yidem and (E) Kalaŋkaa yidem, which are locally and structurally combined to form a single section known as Sie-datɔk.

SIE—the settlement

Sie proper	Sie-datɔk
Kuŋkye biis true sub-clan of Mosuor biis	Two accessory lineages: Daaŋ yidem and Kalaŋkaa yidem

SIEDEM
'The people of Sie'

Their original patrilineal ancestors are said to have come from Kurugu in Mampurugu, long after the foundation of the settlement by Mosuor's 'son' Kuŋkye. As in very many of these traditions of an ancestor who migrated from elsewhere, the motives attributed to him are the same as those which frequently prompt young men to move out to the periphery of settlement nowadays—the temptation of ample land when there is a shortage of farmland at home, or the desire for independence. The Sie-datɔk lineages are, therefore, considered to be of the same Mampuru stock (*buarɔt*) as the other Namoos. They have the same funeral ritual and totemic observances as all Namoos—a fact which is the most palpable proof to the natives that they are Namoos.

As with the myth of Mosuor, there is no means of verifying this tradition. The Sie-datɔkdem advance as evidence the fact that they still maintain political and social contacts with Kurugu; but other Namoo clans and lineages have similar relations with the people of Kurugu and do not, on those grounds, claim kinship (*mabiirɔt*) with them, except in so far as all Namoos speak of themselves as the kin (*mabiis*), in the widest sense, of the Mamprusi. The Tallensi, as we have already observed, do not make these critical comparisons. Their tradition accounts satisfactorily, in their view, to the Sie-datɔk lineages—and also to the people of Sie proper—for their being Namoos, and for their relations with the authentic lineage of Mosuor biis at Sie.

In relation to each other the two lineages of Sie-datɔk act as the major segments of an inclusive maximal lineage, though they do not claim to have a single common ancestor. This assimilation is rationalized by the dogma that their ancestors were kinsmen (*mabiis*), though of what degree they do not profess to know, nor do they consider it relevant. This dogma, like their tradition of origin, is validated by the existing structural

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maintaining, amity and solidarity in the clan, and no less efficacious in promoting their increase and prosperity than the ancestral cult of Mosuor biis. Such mystical interpretations are, in fact, a reflex of the social structure. They throw no light on the problem of the numbers of Mosuor's posterity. Without historical documents we must accept it as one of the given facts of Tale society.

Here a point of particular interest may be noted. Though they are held, in common with other Namoo clans in Taleland, to be an intrusive group by origin, the clan of Mosuor biis forms the backbone of Tale political organization. They place their founding ancestor some eight to ten generations back counting from the heads of existing minimal lineages. But the clans which claim to be autochthonous and to have antedated all the Namoos of Taleland in their occupation of the country give pedigrees of about the same chronological extension. It is obvious therefore that no means of estimating the relative lengths of time during which Namoos and non-Namoos have been settled in Taleland are provided by their genealogies. Like their myths of origin, the chronological retrospect implied in Tale clan or lineage genealogies has no historical value. The chronological depth of their genealogies and the fact that they preserve the graves of significant ancestors seem to justify the inference that the Tale Namoos have occupied their present settlements for not less than two and possibly for three centuries. The Tallensi, however, do not evaluate their genealogies in this way. Genealogies are significant to them as one of the principal instruments for organizing their present social relations. They are kept alive only in so far as they serve this end, and have no value, therefore, as a measure of the time during which a clan or lineage has been in existence. The uniform genealogical retrospect of Namoo and non-Namoo clans in Taleland is a reflex of the stability and coherence of their social and political relations. The only historical inference one can justifiably make is that their present social order has been in existence for a greater length of time than the memories of the oldest living natives can compass. This is the essence of the statement 'It has been thus since the days of our fathers and forefathers', which the natives regard as a sufficient explanation of the origin of most of their institutions.

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gird their dead with a sheepskin loin cover (*ba suona pthug*) and taboo (*kih*) the tortoise (*pakur*) and the water-tortoise (*miey*)'. The people of Zubiuŋ, as we have seen, also fix upon their mortuary and funeral rites and their totemic avoidances as the two main indices of their affinity with the Talis. They add to this their special ritual relationship with the Earth, symbolized by the office of the tendaana.

Most of the Talis, it is true, gird the dead (that is, males who have begotten children before they die and are therefore considered to be socially mature) with a sheepskin; but there are a few exceptions. The people of Ka'ar use an oribi (*walag*) skin, and the people of Gorogo, as well as some of the Teelag lineages, use only a piece of string

The sheepskin has the same ritual value for the Talis as the goatskin has for the Namoos. Identical beliefs and attitudes lie behind these differences of usage, which are clearly a function of the social cleavage between Namoos and Talis. Members of either group often have great knowledge of the mythology, the ritual practices, and the distinctive beliefs and customs of the other group. They pick up this knowledge when they go on visits to their maternal kin in the other group, and the underlying identity of beliefs and values makes this easy. Yet it would be inconceivable for the people of either group deliberately to take over the usages of the other group. The assimilations of custom that have taken place have been unconscious.

Talis explain deviations from the common ritual, such as those of the people of Ka'ar or of Gorogo, by the cliché, 'Our ancestors desired it so'. Thus the Gorogo people claim that their founding ancestor originally came from the Woologa country. They still have ceremonial ties with the people of Chana, which they say was their ancestor's place of origin. They connect their custom of putting a string on a corpse with this myth, for both myth and custom distinguish them from the other Hill Talis. It is significant that the Teelag lineages which have the same custom have no clanship ties with Gorogo, nor is any explanation offered by either group of the common ritual usage.

The Tallensi see the binding force of any observance held by the lineage or clan as deriving from an ancestor whose edict it is said to have been. The concept *kih*, it must be remembered, is applied not only to ritual prohibitions but also to ritual injunctions. The sheepskin loin cover for the dead is also a *kihar*. The moral imperative of a ritual prohibition or injunction—a *kihar*—is connected with the dependence of the lineage on its ancestors' goodwill for its survival and welfare. And there is another point. The most sacred duty owed by son to parent or parent to child is the performance of his or her funeral ceremonies. It is unthinkable, and it has never been known, for a native to fail in this duty, though nobody can compel him to do it. This is the case in spite of the fact that funeral rites are also the concern of the whole lineage and clan. In funeral ceremonies the structure of the lineage and clan emerges into action as perhaps in no other Tale institution. And it emerges in such a way as to show up clearly how the moral responsibility of the individual to his forbears is a function of his rights and duties as a lineage member and is a factor in the cohesion of the lineage.

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much as a quarter of a mile apart. The greater congestion of the older settlements is correlated with greater fragmentation of holdings, due to the greater length of time they have been continuously occupied.

The population of Taleland, as of the remainder of the trans-Volta plateau, appears to have been increasing steadily in the recent past. In the older settlements it is clearly excessive in relation to the available land and the level of technical skill of the natives. This is the opinion both of Government officials and of the natives themselves. The natives always say that shortage of cultivable land was the main incentive for the migration of young men to the peripheral 'bush' zone in the past; and the men who have come to settle permanently in the peripheral settlements during the last two or three decades always ascribe their move from their natal settlements to the same cause. Labour migration during the past ten or fifteen years has been much influenced by pressure of population on the land in the most congested areas.

These economic adaptations of the natives and their general standard of living, as well as the territorial distribution of such clans as Mosuor biis in Taleland, compel the inference that the population has been increasing for some time. But adequate statistics for measuring the present rate of increase in the population, or for establishing its trend in the past, are lacking.[1]

There are no clear-cut geographical features regulating the distribution of homesteads in most settlements. The location of water-supplies has no bearing on it, since Tale agriculture relies wholly on rainfall, and domestic requirements are a secondary consideration, and offer no difficulties in the wet season. Towards the end of the dry season the domestic consumption of water is cut to the minimum necessary for cooking and drinking. When water is scarce, the average Talaŋ is content to go unwashed for weeks at a stretch. By the end of the dry season most surface supplies have vanished, and water is usually obtained from shallow pits, artificially deepened and enlarged from time to time by those who use them. These pits are regular water-holes (*bulag*), utilized solely for that purpose throughout the year. A large settlement has several, situated in the dry beds of what are strong streams (*kolag*), or in the depressions (*bo'og*) which become swamps and pools during the rains. A water-hole generally serves the needs of the homesteads within a radius of about a quarter to half a mile. But at times of acute shortage the women and girls may have to go a mile or more to fill their water-pots.

Variations in elevation influence the scatter of homesteads to some extent. Inured though they are to the discomforts of their climate, the Tallensi prefer to build on high ground if possible. Thus, in the older settlements, homesteads tend to cluster closer together where there is a rise in the ground, and to be few and far between where there is a de-

[1] Reliable reproduction rates, either for the Northern Territories as a whole or for Taleland in particular, cannot be calculated from the data given in the abstract of the census of 1931, and there are no other official statistics, published or unpublished, which could be used for this purpose. My own exiguous demographic data suggest that the population of the older Tale settlements is increasing, though not steeply.

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silk-cotton, are prominent landmarks in a country of monotonous plains; hence settlements and sections often bear the names of species of trees found there.

Kuorəg was thus named, according to popular etymology, because the Soog Yikpɛmdaana, who holds the ritual jurisdiction over the land on which the homesteads of Kuorəg stand, ritually allocated or 'cut' (*kuo*) the sites for all these homesteads when Tongo men first settled there. In the same way popular etymology explains the name Dekpieŋ ('it is hard') as derived from the hardness (*kpeoŋ*) of the soil in that part of the settlement as compared with that of Puhug or Seug. Seug literally means 'the rainy season', but no one in Tongo was ever able to suggest how this section acquired its name; and this is characteristic of very many settlement and section names in Taleland.

To the people of Tongo their present residential constellation is the visible deposit, as it were, of the continuous expansion of the sub-clan through many generations within the limits of its geographical environment and social boundaries. They read the spatial disposition of the four sections as a record of their structural evolution, as a map of the contemporary constitution, and as proof of the chronological retrospect of the sub-clan. Mosuor came to settle at Puhug, where his grave still marks the site of his homestead. As his posterity increased in numbers, they began to move outwards in the same way as young men migrate to Zoo, Gbambee, and farther, nowadays, and for the same reason, shortage of farm-land. Thus Guŋ, Kuorəg, and Seug were occupied. Later, the descendants of those who founded Guŋ became too numerous for the land available there, and, prevented from expanding into Wakii by the social barriers between Tongo and that clan, filtered gradually into the area that is now Dekpieŋ. Arguing from what may be observed nowadays, they say that this was largely a process of occupying hitherto vacant land at a time when the population was very small. But it was partly, also, a process of dispossessing and pushing out to their present location the people of Zubiuŋ and of Gbizug, who claim to have lived at Puhug originally. In proof of this they cite their myths of origin, the fact that the dancing-ground in Puhug is sacred because it is the site of Tɛndaan Gɛnət's homestead, and the ritual jurisdiction exercised over part of the land of Puhug by Gbizug and over the remainder by Zubiuŋ. Indeed, there are Zubiuŋ graves on land now occupied by Dekpieŋ men which are said to date back only three to five generations. This proves that the people of Zubiuŋ were still yielding ground to the Tɔndem, as they themselves admit, when elders alive to-day were 'already born'.

There is nothing derogatory in such a retreat. On the contrary, Gbizug and Zubiuŋ elders boast of it as additional evidence of the dependence of the people of Tongo on their ritual benevolence and bounty. It is a cardinal rule of Tale ethics that a request for land to build on and farm—especially if it comes from a kinsman, friend, or neighbour—may not be refused if it can be granted without hardship. There was formerly, and there still is to a small extent, land to spare at Gbizug and at Zubiuŋ. Tongo people have innumerable ties of kinship and neighbourhood with Gbizug and Zubiuŋ, which are the more effective on account of the ties

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four major segments of the clan have an equal role. All have the same obligations and the same rights, vested in them as corporate units defined in relation to the whole clan; and all the segments must participate in equal degree. A similar corporate activity in a clan like Zubiuŋ is a sacrifice to the External *Bɔyar*, Duunkpaləg.

The four sections of Tongo are equal and co-ordinate in political and jural matters. In religious matters of common interest Puhug is senior (*kpeem*) to the other sections. This is because Mosuor's grave and *bɔyar* and Sɛyahəg's grave and *bɔyar* are the exclusive charge of Puhug, whose section head (*yizug kpeem*) always has custody of these shrines and officiates in sacrifices to them.

The Local Embodiment of the Ritual Focus of the Sub-clan

Puhug was the original home (*daboog*) of Mosuor. There he dwelt beside Tɛndaan Gɛnət, the site of whose *daboog* is now the sacred dancing-ground of the *Giŋgaaŋ* Festival, hence called Giŋgaaŋ Puhug. This is the hub of Tongo as an enduring and stable local unit. Whatever vicissitudes the clan may suffer, whether it expands or contracts, however widely its members may be dispersed, Giŋgaaŋ Puhug remains for ever fixed and inviolable, the heart of the clan and the visible and consecrated sign of its existence and persistence. At the edge of Giŋgaaŋ Puhug is the grave of Tɛndaan Gɛnət, and nearby are the graves of the first ancestors of Mosuor biis—Mosuor, Sɛyahəg, and Bɔyada—marking the sites where their homesteads stood. Thus the ritual and ideological focus of Tongo's corporate unity as a descent group (and the same rule applies to all Tale clans) is directly bound up with its physical counterpart, the local focus of Tongo's unity and identity. In clans that have tɛndaanas, it is usually the principal Earth shrine (*tɔŋgban*) that is the consecrated local focus of the clan.

Mosuor's grave, marked by an irregular flat heap of large stones, lies under an enormous old baobab tree which the people of Tongo say *is* Mosuor (see map of Tongo). On the side of the trunk facing the grave are signs of the sacrifices offered there—dirty streaks of dried blood and flour-water, and patches of fowl and guinea-fowl feathers stuck to the trunk with blood. It is a prominent landmark in Puhug, and a favourite shade tree for the people of the nearby homesteads. There the old men come and rest on hot afternoons, infants are put out to sit, well protected from the sun, while their mothers get on with the household work, and older children come to play or to swing in the branches. It is characteristic of the Tallensi that the people of Tongo treat their most sacred shrines in this realistic and matter-of-fact way in the context of everyday life. The tree is sacred, it is a *Bayar*, but it is also just a tree, whose ritual significance is not relevant except on a ritual occasion. Then it is treated with appropriate reverence. And this is true, also, of ancestral graves, which are often treated very casually and sometimes allowed to fall into such neglect that none but the elders of the lineage descended from him know exactly where a particular ancestor's grave is. Mosuor's grave, however, being of such outstanding ritual importance for the whole of Tongo, is more carefully kept and is always treated with respect.

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778 The graves of Sɛyahəg and Bəyada lie within a couple of minutes' walk
769 of each other and of Mosuor's baobab in Puhug. Though Bəyada's grave is in the middle of the home farm of a Puhug man, its custody is vested in Kuorəg, whose head comes to sacrifice there periodically. Similarly Siiyɛŋ, Kəbər, and Bəyayiedət, the ancestors of Guŋ and Dekpieŋ, lie buried at Guŋ proper, at the *daboog* of this *yizug*, though the majority of their descendants live at Dekpieŋ.

●173 For the people of Tongo—and this also applies to all Tallensi except
764 the Hill Talis—the disposition of graves maps out the gradual increase or diminution in numbers of the clan or any segment of the clan through the generations, and its gradual territorial expansion or retraction. Thus Tɛndaan Gɛnət's house site and grave in the centre of Puhug are accepted as proof that the Gbizugdɛm lived there at the time of Mosuor's arrival and were gradually pushed out to their present location by the spreading of Mosuor's progeny. The founding ancestor of Zubiuŋ Yakəradɛm, Gɛnət's putative brother, is also believed to have lived at Puhug at that remote period, and they, too, are said to have been dispossessed by Mosuor biis. Similarly the location of Bəyada's grave is proof to the natives that the growing numbers of Puhugdɛm caused his descendants to withdraw gradually into what is now Kuorəg.

Structure of the Clan Settlement among non-Namoos

613 Among Talis as well as Namoos in the older part of Taleland, the clan
621 settlement is built up round the lineage in this way. In composite clans
764 the tendency is always for each constituent maximal lineage to form a locally distinct though not strictly demarcated aggregate, and for the segments of these *yizugət* to follow the same rule more markedly. The correlation of residence with lineage, ancestral lands, and the graves of the ancestors holds. At Zubiuŋ, at Ba'ari, and among the non-Namoo clans living in the vicinity of Yaməlag and Sie—the group of clans which the Hill Talis regard as having been culturally influenced by the Namoos—a person is buried among his own (or her husband's) immediate forebears near the homestead. The Hill Talis bury their dead in small cemeteries, each section (*yizug*) or main segment (*dug*) of a section usually
[184 having its own. Among all the Talis and the non-Namoos of the Sie
778] district a sacred grove (*tɔŋgbaŋ*) or an External *Bɔyar* takes the place of the sacred dancing-ground at Tongo as the local and spiritual focus of the settlement. The homestead of the *yizug* head, housing the most important shrines of its ancestors, whatever his ritual office may be, is often fixed, so that when a man succeeds to the office he takes possession also of the homestead that goes with it; thus the idea of the home of the maximal lineage has an everlasting and consecrated embodiment in the actual homestead occupied by its head.

184 Among the clans which have tɛndaanas the local anchorage of the
793 clan and of its constituent maximal lineages is, in some respects, even
621 stronger than among the Namoos. It is more conspicuously wrought into their institutions and more obviously sacrosanct, since the office of tɛndaana presupposes very special ritual bonds, the strongest bonds known to the Tallensi, of a maximal lineage with locality.

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framework in politically centralized societies. Tale political relations are dominated by the facts of genealogical connexion on the one hand, and by the bonds of ritual interdependence on the other.

Looking only at the macroscopic structure of Tale society, therefore, we realize that it is a very complicated mosaic in which every tie between corporate units is counterbalanced by cleavages between them, all loyalties between corporate units are kept within bounds by loyalties towards other units, and all common interests are set off by divergent interests. The Tallensi provide an interesting example of a society in which there is a very strong tendency towards a general equilibrium in the collective life. What we have called Tale society is a social region demarcated by the range of the dynamic equilibrium that prevails within it. Non-Tale means simply outside this equilibrium; or rather, to be precise, it means on and beyond the circumference of this equilibrium. This is the essential difference between societies like the Tallensi and those that derive their unity from defined territorial boundaries and subjection to a common, all-powerful government. That does not mean that a segmentary social structure and a pyramidal social structure are necessarily mutually exclusive. It is quite possible for the subdivisions of a centralized state to have a segmentary social organization.

Re-examination of the Major Cleavage: Warfare

Through this mosaic, however, runs a major cleavage of great significance, as we have learnt. It is most conspicuous in the Tongo area. For this there may be historical reasons, but we have no means of discovering them. What is beyond question is that this fact is a fundamental feature of the existing structure of the society. Tongo is the most important centre of Namoo settlement; the Tong Hills area is the pivot of the ritual cults and values which play so dominant a part in Tale political relations. In consequence, the cleavage upon which the whole politico-ritual system hinges is most conspicuous there.

When Tallensi discuss the cleavage between Namoos and non-Namoos, they often hark back to the wars of former days. There are still old men living who took part in the last of those wars, and many middle-aged men and women tell tales of the fighting they saw as children or heard of from their parents; these wars are also a common theme of funeral dirges.

But the Tallensi are not one of those warlike African peoples who have a hypnotic effect even on anthropologists. Like most peasants who wring a bare subsistence from the soil, they have much too prosaic an attachment to their homes, their families, and their farms, and much too lively an appreciation of the perils of commonplace living to overrate the warrior. Not that Tallensi are lacking in physical courage or combativeness. They are quick to resent a trespass on their rights and readily snatch up a weapon or missile if they are provoked. In the old days a fearless and successful fighter (*zai*, pl. *za'ab*) was admired. The deeds of some of these great fighters of old are still recounted with pride. To kill an enemy in war was something to boast of. It was a mark of manliness as well as an important service to the clan. But there was a dark side

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to it; and nowadays the natives lay more stress on this than on the ancient glory of success in war. There was the mystical danger of reprisals from the spirit of one's victim (*gil*) following one all one's life. There was the hate created in the dead man's kin, agnates and extra-clan kin, including probably some of one's own clansmen or clansmen's wives. At best they might try to injure one by means of bad medicine; at worst it meant that one could never take part in a sacrifice or meal in which they shared. If one did, their hidden hatred had a mystical power to kill one. Nor did a man who had excelled in war derive any social, economic, or political advantage from it. It did not add to his wealth or give him more influence in the councils of the community. Soon even the fame of his prowess became dim, for it is bad form to talk publicly, during his lifetime, about the deeds of a man who has slain an enemy. It 'whitens (*pɛlɔg*)' him—that is, exposes him to the wrath of his victim's spirit which resents public comment on his defeat. A great fighter is praised in dirges and speeches after his death. But in the past, as now, it was the good farmer and not the bold fighter who was held up as the ideal of a worthwhile life.

Tallensi speak of fighting with weapons, for whatever reason, as one of the necessary evils of the old days. They look back without regrets on the passing of warfare. They regard the shedding of human blood, even in self-defence or in justifiable anger, as sinful. To kill a man in war was not homicide; one did not have to make heavy expiatory sacrifices to the Earth for it, yet one could never get rid of the blood taint (*ziem*). In 1936 two of the oldest men I knew died. There was much whispered talk about them. People pointed out that they had died in utter penury, lacking even a sheep for their grave-clout. Yet at different times in their long lives they had owned many cattle and had had several wives. Worse still, they had died leaving only one or two young children, the survivors of large families. Their lives had been tragically futile, by Tale standards. And why? Because they had both been redoubtable fighters in their young days; they had killed men in war; and this was the nemesis. All the animals they had sacrificed in expiation had been in vain, in the long run.

The most heinous sin of all was to instigate (*sa*) a war. It did not matter if the man had justice on his side. In the long run he paid for his sin with sickness and death, and the tale of misfortune might follow his descendants in the male line for generations. When Siiyɛlib died, the diviner consulted to find out the cause of his death revealed an unexampled story of misfortune going back twenty-five years. One after another, Siiyɛlib's wives and children had died; rinderpest had wiped out his cattle; and at last he himself had died without a son to mourn him and in extreme poverty. All this went back to his part in the Tong Hills Expedition of 1910–11, of which, the natives believe, he had been one of the prime instigators.

Before the arrival of the British the Tallensi, in common with their neighbours, had no judicial system. This was in keeping with their lack of a centralized form of government. As far as there was a 'rule of law'—that is, general observance of rights and obligations in property relations, in person-to-person relations, in intra- and inter-group relations subject